Accessing electronic resources by medical trainees of the Postgraduate Institute of Medicine, University of Colombo: Issues and concerns

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University libraries which attached to the higher educational institutions are facing challenges to provide innovative digital services due to the paradigm shift from printed to electronic environment. As the library, Postgraduate Institute of Medicine (PGIM) has initiated the provision of electronic services, it is essential to analyze the issues and concerns in accessing electronic services by diversified users. The aim of this study was to analyze the issues and concerns in relation to accessing electronic resources by post-graduate trainees. A questionnaire was distributed among 427 whilst 380 (89%) responded. The majority were female (65.5%) and 60.4% were in 28-38 years age group. Findings established that e-journals subscribed by the PGIM are used by 72%, open sources by 70.2% and Health Inter Network Access to Research Initiative (HINARI) by 67.7%. 87.4 % of the trainees accepted that the training would improve the skills in accessing electronic resources. The major issues identified by the respondents are absence of remote access to subscribed journals (79.7%); lack of training (69%); internet speed (64%), lack of computers in the library (63.4%), lack of time to search for information (55%) and lack of searching skills (49.5%). Increasing the access points with fast access, more orientations, short courses, developing an information technology module in the post-graduate curriculum and remote access for subscribed resources were the main concerns of the respondents. It is recommended to make arrangements to provide remote access for subscribed e-resources; arrange more training programs on database searching skills; expand the computer access points with fast internet connection; arrangements to include information technology module into the post-graduate curriculum and to extend the opening hours of the library, PGIM.

Keywords: electronic environment; electronic information resources; postgraduate medical education; PGIM